



OREGON
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oregon Wine Symposium Delivers Business Insights for the Wine Industry

PORTLAND, ORE. (Feb. 10, 2015) — Delivering useful business information will be a key focus of the 2015 Oregon Wine Symposium held Feb. 24 and 25 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland. The Symposium offers attendees a rich menu of seminars and speakers on topics of vital interest to all segments of the Oregon wine industry, from business and marketing to viticulture and enology. Registration can be accomplished by visiting symposium.oregonwine.org.

“Attendees can choose from a variety of seminar topics and learn from experienced wine industry experts,” said Ellen Brittan, Oregon Wine Board chairwoman. “They will leave each session with actionable intelligence that will help them improve their businesses.”

Keynote Offers Entrepreneurial Wisdom

The Oregon Wine Symposium keynote address, *Observations from a Wine Entrepreneur: Using Technology to Facilitate Connections, Create Measurable Experiences and Drive Sales*, will be delivered by Michael Dorf. As founder and CEO of City Winery, a unique urban wine and music experience, Michael has been lauded by both The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal as an “impresario,” and named one of the “10 Most Influential New Yorkers” by New York Magazine.

Michael comes to the Symposium to share his unique insights into wine entrepreneurship, the behavioral and technological shifts driving consumers’ wine buying habits and observations about how to effectively forge direct, one-to-one relationships with fine wine buyers.

In his presentation, Michael will bridge these concepts to the Oregon wine industry’s growth potential in direct-to-consumer sales by illustrating the ways the internet era facilitates closer connections with fans to deliver meaningful, authentic, measurable experiences that are unique to the traditional art forms of winemaking, wine sales, and connoisseurship.

General Sessions Focus on Broad Industry Interests

The Symposium will kickoff Tuesday morning with a *State of the Industry* analysis by Mark Freund of Silicon Valley Bank and Christian Miller of Full Glass Research. This annual talk will delve into the data behind the industry's growth, financial health and economic context, while offering an experienced perspective on the prospects for the coming year.

The lunchtime general session will feature the highly-anticipated *Climatology Report* by Dr. Gregory V. Jones of Southern Oregon University. Dr. Jones will review in detail the 2014 vintage weather, harvest conditions, phenology and growing conditions throughout Oregon, along with a prediction of what to expect for 2015 climate conditions.

Wednesday morning's general session will present *The Situation and Solution in Farm Labor*. Dan Fazio of the Washington Farm Labor Association and Dr. Edward Taylor of the University of California, Davis, will present an overview of the changing demographic and economic conditions in Mexico and how they are impacting farm labor in the wine industry. They will also present information on how to use the H2A visa program to secure reliable sources of farm labor.

General Business Seminars

On-premise wine sales are a critical component of Oregon's market. Doug Frost MS, MW, will lead a panel discussion on what makes the restaurant wine buyer tick. *Inside the Head of a Sommelier* will present panelists Rob Bigelow MS of Ste. Michelle Wine Estates and Jeff Lindsay-Thorsen of Seattle's RN47 and W.T. Vintners to discuss how wineries can set themselves up for on-premise success.

A key marketing challenge is finding ways to differentiate your brand from the rest of the winery pack. A two-part seminar titled "What's The Story?" will give attendees expert advice on how to set their brands apart. The first panel will provide insights on the strategic process of *Differentiating Your Brand Through Storytelling*. Panelists Sara Schneider of Sunset Magazine, Lisa Prince of Wieden + Kennedy and Clare Carver of Big Table Farm will share their success tips and advice.

The second panel will look at the tactical issues of *Making Your Story Stick and Sell*. Katie Sims of KMS Communications, Sarah Graves of Young's Market Company Northwest and Jeff Knapp of Sokol Blosser Winery will examine how to effectively communicate your brand story to the critical audiences of wine media, distributors and tasting room customers.

Executive/Owner Business Sessions

At their session *Money Matters: Drivers of Profitability in the Wine Industry*, Jack Irvine and Kevin O'Brien of Irvine & Company will share their experience with the business concepts used by successful wineries in identifying and exploiting the true drivers of profitability. This session is a must-attend for winery owners and executives.

Take It Outside: Using Contract Resources to Enhance Vineyard and Winery Operations will be presented by Jesse Lyon of Davis Wright Tremaine LLP. Lyon is the general counsel for the Oregon Winegrowers Association and will discuss the issues of deciding when and how to use outside contractors effectively for vineyard and winery work.

Tax planning and getting ready for ownership transition, including to the next generation, is the subject of *Family Matters: The Business of Succession and Tax Planning*. Panelists Susan Sokol Blosser of Sokol Blosser Winery, John Hirschy of Black Helderline LLP and Mark Wickman of Wickman Paterson Corrigan will discuss what to consider in planning and executing an ownership transition plan, whether as a family business or to new owners.

Additional Symposium content tracks include viticulture, enology and a trade show with nearly 200 exhibitors of products and services. For a complete schedule of events and seminars, and to register for the Oregon Wine Symposium, please visit symposium.oregonwine.org.

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About the Oregon Wine Board:

The Oregon Wine Board is a semi-independent Oregon state agency managing marketing, research and education initiatives that support and advance the Oregon wine and wine grape industry. The Board works on behalf of all Oregon wineries and independent growers throughout the state's diverse winegrowing regions. Visit www.oregonwine.org

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